

Don't Waiver on Health Care DSHS tries to Slash Medicaid Program



The Town Hall meeting is your opportunity to ask DSHS critical questions about its intentions for our Medicaid program.

Washington State is a national leader in providing health care to the uninsured. Yet, DSHS Secretary Dennis Braddock is working to undermine the foundation of Medicaid: the federal-state program that provides health insurance to more than 800,000 Washingtonians.

DSHS argues that it must slash Medicaid because of shrinking tax revenue and increasing Medicaid costs. However, Washington Citizen Action members have presented numerous alternatives to DSHS to save money in the Medicaid program without harming consumers. Secretary Braddock has failed to investigate these options before attempting to dismantle Washington's Medicaid program.

What the DSHS waiver proposal means to Medicaid consumers:

1. ***New, expensive premiums will result in more uninsured people.*** Studies demonstrate that premiums keep low-income families from enrolling in health care programs and DSHS' own data supports these studies.
2. ***Less benefits for "optional" Medicaid consumers.*** DSHS plans to slash benefits for those that the federal government defines as "optional," including a senior living at the poverty level or a parent working full-time at minimum wage.
3. ***Waiting lists for the uninsured.*** Currently, if a person is eligible for Medicaid, the state cannot deny them the service. If the federal government approves DSHS Sec. Braddock's waiver, the state will be able to cap the Medicaid program and establish waiting lists.

A snapshot of DSHS proposed changes

Issue	Current Medicaid Program	Proposed Changes
Premiums	None	Up to 5% of Family's Income
Optional Benefits	Included	Slashed
If Eligible	Medicaid Must Take You	Can establish a cap or waiting list

For more information, contact Washington Citizen Action at 206-389-0050 x108.
Ask for Tom Vasquez, organizer.

Speak Up Today!

Tell DSHS: Don't Waiver on Health Care

- Negotiate lower prices with prescription drugs companies (prescription drugs are the fastest growing cost driver in Medicaid).
- Maximize federal funds for health care. Cutting Medicaid will mean Washington state gets less money from the federal government.
- By engaging in the HIFA waiver process, Washington state may lose future federal money because of new waiver rules made by the Bush administration.

Ask DSHS these questions

1. How many Medicaid consumers does DSHS expect to lose by establishing a premium?
2. What additional financial strain will hospitals face when low-income people cannot not afford health insurance or have untreated health care problems that require urgent care?
3. How much extra cost does DSHS expect due to increased emergency room visits from an increased number of uninsured people in Washington?
4. Why do we have a Medicaid system if a body not accountable to the public can change the system at its own whim?
5. In a budget crisis, why would Washington State adopt policies that limit money we are getting from the Federal government?
6. Where will newly uninsured people from this policy obtain health considering public hospital and clinics are already at maximum capacity?